

1229766

Registered provider: Aurora Care and Education Opco Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately run home provides care for up to 29 children with complex needs, including autism spectrum disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, profound learning difficulties and/or sensory and/or physical impairments. Most children attend the on-site school. The inspectors only inspected the social care provision.

The registered manager left on 27 February 2023. A new manager has been appointed and is in the process of applying for registration with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 30 May and 1 June 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 21 June 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/06/2022	Full	Good
17/11/2021	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
04/05/2021	Full	Good
19/11/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of the inspection, there were 19 children living at the home. Children are supported with good-quality individualised care that improves their well-being and future opportunities. Children provided positive feedback about staff and said that they enjoy spending time with them.

Staff build strong relationships with children and have a good understanding of their complex needs. Staff act as positive role models and treat children with dignity and high mutual regard. Parents identified the positive difference that staff's support has made to children's progress in their independence and behaviour.

Children are engaging well in their education and have high attendance. Staff support children's education targets and maintain children's learning experiences at the home. Managers have recently improved the working relationships between residential staff and school staff. This has strengthened the approach to children's learning.

Children take part in a wide range of meaningful experiences. These include trips to the beach, zoos and restaurants. A variety of sensory activities are available at the home, including access to an on-site hydrotherapy pool. Well-planned activities meet children's individual preferences and interests.

Children receive support from a range of professionals, including nurses and occupational speech and language therapists. Feedback from social workers and parents highlights the success of this collaborative working and how it meets children's complex needs.

The home is generally well appointed and equipped to meet children's preferences. Managers have invested in new good-quality play equipment in the grounds, which is enjoyed by children. However, flooring in two of the flats is worn and needs replacing. While improvement works are planned, these issues detract from what is otherwise a well-decorated home.

Staff celebrate children's milestones and recognise children's achievements. Pictorial memorabilia provide an important keepsake for children to reflect on their successes. However, the system in capturing the steps to help children become more independent needs improving. Further development is also needed for staff to support children with reduced levels of communication to better express their views about the home.

Although managers' general oversight of children's plans is good, one child's health action plan has not been reviewed within manager's timescales. Another child's plan around their mental health is not up to date to effectively guide staff. This means

that strategies to promote better health outcomes for these children may not be fully understood or followed by staff.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Parents have trust and confidence that the staff advocate for their children's best interests, safety and well-being. Staff provide consistent routines that help children to feel secure. This is an important factor for children who rely on consistent routines and clear expectations to help them to feel safe.

The implementation of good-quality risk assessments actively ensures that children are safer. Staff are not risk-averse and use dynamic risk assessments to ensure that children take balanced risks. Staff respond to the children's progress by reducing levels of supervision when it is safe to do so. For example, one child has moved to less staffing for increased periods of time during the day. This is an important milestone for the child's development.

Staff successfully use proactive behaviour management strategies to reduce situations that can increase children's anxiety. Staff have a good awareness of potential triggers and combine this with effective de-escalation approaches to minimise difficult incidents. No physical interventions have been necessary since the last inspection.

Managers maintain appropriate safer recruitment processes for staff. Agency staff checks have recently improved and ensure that these staff have had appropriate suitability checks before working at the home.

Staff are well trained in understanding effective safeguarding practice. They are clear about their roles and responsibilities to safeguard the children, and have good knowledge of the children's additional vulnerabilities.

Some of the investigations into safeguarding concerns are not thorough enough. One investigation into an allegation of harm lacked professional curiosity and depth. Staff's statements were not checked, and other records were missing. This contravenes the home's policy to ensure that safeguarding investigations are fair and comprehensive.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager left in February 2023. A new experienced and qualified manager has been appointed and is in the process of registering with Ofsted. The new manager is part of the senior leadership team. The managers oversee the support for children across five individual flats. Managers are child focused and determined to provide good-quality outcomes for children.

Recent staff recruitment initiatives have been successful. This has led to less reliance on agency staff. Agreed staffing ratios with children's placing authorities are adhered to. Children are beginning to benefit from increased continuity of care.

Staff receive a wide range of training that equips them with the skills and understanding to meet the children's individual needs.

Staff say that they feel well supported by managers. Most staff receive supervision in line with the home's policy. However, supervisions for agency staff who work regular shifts are not frequent enough. As a result, these agency staff do not have suitable time to reflect on their practice and development.

Managerial monitoring systems are generally effective. However, there are gaps in recording important body chart records for one child. This has not led to increased risk of harm for the child, but has the potential to do so if left unchecked.

The manager's internal quality of care review contains areas of good evaluation and reflection. However, this fails to consider consultations with children and staff. Furthermore, objectives identified for continuous improvement are not always specific or measurable. These reviews could be further developed in order to make a stronger contribution to the wider system of quality assurance.

Processes for notifying Ofsted are in place. Most notifications are completed when required. However, one allegation about a member of staff was not notified. This reduces Ofsted's capacity to ensure that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are place.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(vii))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that records of investigations are comprehensive and include all the required details.</p>	7 July 2023
<p>The health and well-being standard is that—</p> <p>the health and well-being needs of children are met.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff help each child to—</p> <p>understand the child's health and well-being needs and the options that are available in relation to the child's health and well-being, in a way that is appropriate to the child's age and understanding. (Regulation 10 (1)(a) (2)(a)(ii))</p> <p>In particular, ensure health action plans are up to date.</p>	7 July 2023
<p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. (Regulation 40 (4)(c))</p>	7 July 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home is decorated to a consistently high standard throughout the accommodation. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that managerial monitoring systems identify and action gaps in staff's recording. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- The registered person should ensure that children's progress in independence and expressing their views is systematically monitored. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.4)
- The registered person should ensure that agency staff receive supervision at appropriate intervals. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.3)
- The registered person should ensure that the quality of care review meets all the aspects stipulated in Regulation 45. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.2)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, using the social care common inspection framework. This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1229766

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Aurora Care and Education Opco Limited

Registered provider address: Unit 13, Twigworth Court Business Centre,
Tewkesbury Road, Gloucester, Gloucestershire GL2 9PG

Responsible individual: Philip Jonas

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Mark Anderton, Social Care Inspector
Russel Breyer, His Majesty's Inspector, Social Care
Leanne Lyon, Social Care Inspector

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